

VZCZCXRO9070  
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #1304/01 1181534  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 271534Z APR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7056  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC//NSC// PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001304

SIPDIS

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2018  
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: NSA RUBAIE ON NEXT STEPS FOR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK  
AND SECURITY IN BASRAH, SADR CITY, MOSUL

Classified By: Minister-Counselor for Political-Military Affairs Marcie  
[1](#)B. Ries for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(S) SUMMARY: In an April 23 meeting, S/I Senior Advisor David Satterfield, Pol-Mil Minister Counselor Ries, and Iraqi National Security Advisor (NSA) Mowafuq Rubaie discussed next steps in the Strategic Framework/SOFA process (on track), the Kuwait Neighbors Ministerial (good show for Maliki, dismal performance by Iran), and security operations and plans in Basrah, Baghdad's Sadr City, and Mosul. Rubaie agreed with the need for a greater emphasis on relief, economic, and tribal engagement to complement combat operations but acknowledged the GoI was ill-prepared for this. Rubaie believed it was still possible to accept Muqtada al-Sadr into the political process if he ceased his resistance to governmental authority, but warned that some Special Groups members seemed to be moving back into leadership positions in mainstream Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM).  
END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (S) Key points from S/I Senior Advisor David Satterfield and Pol-Mil Minister Counselor Ries' April 23 call on Iraqi National Security Advisor (NSA) Mowafuq Rubaie:

[1](#)3. (S/NF) STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK. Amb. Satterfield detailed for Rubaie the April 20/22 discussions between the Secretary and PM Maliki on next steps on the Strategic Framework (SF) and Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). The two had agreed that the two documents would be negotiated on parallel tracks. Amb. Loftis and Iraqi Deputy FM Hammoud were meeting April 23 for the next round of SOFA talks. The SF, Amb. Satterfield continued, was a political agreement and needed to be decided at the political level - on the Iraqi side, that would mean the five Executive Council members would provide political guidance through their empowered deputies/representatives. The Secretary had accepted PM Maliki's request (made at the behest of the Presidency Council, Maliki had said) that, at the end of the negotiating process, the SF and SOFA be merged into a single document.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) Amb. Satterfield detailed the Mission's plans to engage individually with key Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish leaders to discuss next steps. Amb. Satterfield said that if the GoI wished to propose specific language in response to the U.S. SF draft, we would welcome this - the sooner the better. Rubaie thought the GoI might have some additional points to add to those proposed by the U.S. side, as well as comments on the U.S. drafts, but he did not expect the GoI to produce its own complete draft. Rubaie proposed that the two sides state the media's appetite by offering the media "a progress report" on

areas of agreement. Amb. Satterfield demurred, citing the pressure this would bring to a process already under scrutiny, and Rubaie dropped the idea.

15. (S) KUWAIT NEIGHBORS' MINISTERIAL. Amb. Satterfield and Rubaie agreed that the just-completed Neighbors ministerial in Kuwait had "come out in a good place." PM Maliki's speech had been well-received by other participants. In contrast, Iranian FM Mottaki's claims that Iran played a constructive role vis--vis Iraq had gone over poorly. Saudi FM Saud al-Faisal had made a point of criticizing Iran's support for anti-GOI elements in the context of the recent Basrah fighting. Rubaie said that the Iranians had been "isolated" in Kuwait and their protestations to Maliki that they respected his status as embodying both governmental legitimacy and political power had been unpersuasive. On the Arab neighbors, Amb. Satterfield noted that the Secretary had strongly urged Maliki to send ambassadors to neighboring countries to place the onus on the Saudis and others to reciprocate. This would require in many cases Council of Representatives (CoR) agreement, which had been delayed because ambassadorial nominations had been coupled to other senior governmental nominations which were stalled within the government. Rubaie said Maliki was considering decoupling the ambassadorial appointments to push them through the CoR, a course Amb. Satterfield said we strongly supported.

16. (S) CONFRONTING THE SADRISTS. Amb. Satterfield asked Rubaie whether he believed Muqtada Sadr was making his own decisions on his stance toward the GoI or was responding to

BAGHDAD 00001304 002 OF 002

Iranian direction. Rubaie sighed theatrically and said that "the more I see of this man, the more confused I am." He offered his personal view (which he was careful to couch as analysis, not the reflection of intelligence information) that Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei supported Sadr with the aim of "containing" him but opposed Shia-on-Shia violence. "Sadr has crossed a line, and this is bad for Iran in the region." Rubaie and Amb Satterfield agreed that Moqtada's recent declaration threatening a war of liberation (from what, exactly, was unclear) had placed him in an untenable situation: if Sadr's followers joined in a renewed uprising against the GoI and Coalition, they would be defeated. If the masses chose not to follow Sadr, he would be humiliated.

17. (S) Rubaie cautioned that GoI intelligence indicated that some Special Group (SG) leaders were not only moving back into the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) mainstream, but were taking leadership positions. This was a disturbing reversal of the success the GoI and coalition had had over the last 10 months in cleaving Special Groups away from the mainstream Sadrism movement. Rubaie observed that the GoI and Coalition should avoid being "excessively kinetic" in their approach to JAM, as "squeezing it more intensely and more quickly than Sadr can tolerate" would increase the chance of uncontrolled violence.

18. (S) Min-Couns Ries asked if there was still opportunity for Sadr to take a place in the political process. Rubaie said this should be conditioned on Sadr and JAM taking four steps: (1) relinquishing their heavy weapons; (2) assisting - or at least not obstructing - GoI efforts to bring identified high-value criminals and terrorists to justice; (3) not obstructing security operations; and (4) not obstructing GoI civil governance. Rubaie said he hoped to develop these four steps as a framework for GoI policy toward all militias and to submit a proposal shortly to the Ministerial Committee for National Security.

19. (S) SADR CITY, BASRAH, MOSUL. Min-Couns Ries said that

USAID was standing by to support emergency economic measures in areas of Sadr City controlled by the GoI, but the Mission was having difficulty discerning who was in charge of the civilian aspect of the GoI campaign. Rubaie confessed, "We have a problem with that." The military had developed elaborate plans for action in Sadr City, but economic assistance "is not in their textbook." He added that Ayatollah Sistani had phoned him to express concern about humanitarian conditions in Sadr City. Furthermore, the Baghdad military command was speaking of preparing for action by evacuating 600,000 people from Sadr City. "That's 20 times more than we evacuated from Fallujah in 2004, and that was an enormous undertaking." The NSA praised MNC-I commanding general LTG Austin and MND-Baghdad commanding general for keeping the pressure on their counterparts to synchronize "non-kinetic" operations with combat operations.

110. (S) Amb. Satterfield reminded Rubaie that the GoI had yet to implement its announced \$100 million emergency plan for Basrah, and Amb. Rubaie acknowledged these points. He admitted as well that the PM - who had received considerable assistance from Basrah-area tribes after the first stage of Operation Charge of the Knights ran into trouble - now appeared to have no clear vision for sustained tribal engagement in Basrah and the south. The NSA said Maliki hoped to go to Mosul in early May for an extended stay to kick off kinetic operations. Min-Couns Ries recommended that the GoI learn its lesson and build the non-kinetic components into its plans for an upcoming operations in Mosul.

CROCKER